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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

22 August 1988

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Memorandum For: Director of Central Intelligence

From:

National Intelligence Officer for Near East
and South Asia

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Subject: Near East and South Asia
Warning and Forecast Meeting: 18 August 1988

1. The Warning and Forecast meeting was held on 18 August 1988 from 10:15 to 12:15 at CIA Headquarters in room 7E62.

2. NIO/NESA began the meeting by explaining that because of the death of President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq on 17 August, most of the Warning and Forecast meeting would be devoted to discussing Pakistan. The Iran-Iraq ceasefire would be briefly discussed at the end of the meeting. The situation on the West Bank/Gaza and implications of Jordan's recent policy changes would be discussed at a future Warning and Forecast meeting.

3. Pakistan: Prospects and Implications after ZIA.

Summary of Community Views

4. Community members believe there was a better than even chance that post-Zia Pakistan would remain relatively stable over the next several months. The elections scheduled for mid-November would be held as planned and Pakistani foreign policy would not change. There was general agreement that none of the major leadership groups--the temporary Advisory Council, the military, the established opposition parties--could benefit from fomenting problems or stopping the elections. Ambitious individuals or religious, regional, or political fanatics, however, might gain from causing turmoil. Miscalculations by some politicians or escalation of political demonstrations into rioting could cause reactions that would be harder for the post-Zia,

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interim regime to control. If unrest develops, the prospects for holding elections and a smooth leadership transition would decline.

What caused Zia's airplane to crash?

5. *Analysts had little information on the cause of the crash and could not rule out either accident or sabotage.*

6. Preliminary reporting states that President Zia's C-130 aircraft was at an altitude of 2000 to 3000 feet when it exploded. The aircraft then went into a steep, nose-first dive and crashed in an area six miles from the airfield. Some observers reported seeing smoke from the wing or rear of the aircraft before it exploded.

Wiring near the wings has started fires on C-130s in the past. US technical and forensic teams have been sent to Pakistan to investigate the crash. They have a good chance of determining the cause of the crash.

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Who might have sabotaged the aircraft?

9. Reports indicate that Zia's trip had been planned long in advance. Moreover, the trip had been postponed many times giving saboteurs ample time to determine the destination and approximate flight times. Analysts noted that security at the airport was poor.

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11. Analysts saw little likelihood that India was responsible for the crash. Indian Prime Minister Gandhi had

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good relations with Zia. Nonetheless, antagonism toward India and efforts to deflect any blame from the Pakistani military might lead some Pakistani officials to accuse New Dehli or Moscow or both, even without evidence. Community members agreed that such a claim could lead to a significant increase in tension between Pakistan and India that would harm US interests in the region.

12. Some reports indicate unhappiness in the lower ranks of the Pakistani military with Zia over the dismissal of the Junejo government last May. A recent report also cited conflict between Zia and General Beg, the new Pakistani Chief of Staff and Chief of the Army. Community members judged, however, that the Pakistani military was unlikely to kill Zia because of the discipline and respect for authority in the armed forces.

13. Although unhappy with Zia's favoritism of Gulbuddin Hikmatyar's insurgent group, analysts judged that other Afghan insurgent groups probably would not kill the Pakistani President. The loss of Zia would remove the key supporter of the Afghan resistance and risk that a new regime might reduce support for all guerrilla groups.

What are the prospects for instability in Pakistan?

14. Analysts believed that there is a better than even chance Pakistan would remain calm in the period between Zia's death and the elections.

15. The Advisory Council named by acting President Ishaq Khan, is experienced and competent. Such councils have governed Pakistan before under Zia and during the 1950s. Although lacking Zia's guiding hand, the council is likely to govern effectively. It probably is acceptable to the military as long as the regime maintains order. About half of the members are military officers while the rest are civilians who served under the martial law administration under Zia. In the near term, the military probably will be content to let Khan govern while officers reorganize after the loss of Zia and other high-ranking generals.

16. The NIO commented that now is the time when the regime in Pakistan is most vulnerable and asked if a Qadhafi-style officer might arise to challenge the advisory council and generals. In response, analysts noted that General Beg's relations are good with corps commanders who actually command troops in Pakistan. Beg also reportedly has the respect of most officers and soldiers. Moreover, the military in Pakistan sees itself as professional and will be content to remain in the background as long as the country remains calm.

17. Civilian reaction to Zia's death so far has been a combination of surprise and shock. The population has

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remained calm with no riots or demonstrations in the cities. Zia was neither hated nor loved but had brought a measure of calm and prosperity in Pakistan. Analysts expected Pakistanis to go through a period of assessment after the initial shock wears off.

How will the opposition conduct their election campaigns?

18. Community members believe that the opposition in Pakistan will become more active in the election process but will remain cautious.

19. The opposition will not begin demonstrations or attempt to disrupt Pakistan for fear that the military will cancel the elections. Benazir Bhutto probably will try to appear moderate and work within the system to reassure the military. Her organization will hold some rallies and demonstrations in anticipation of elections, but she has recently shown skill at keeping such events peaceful and under control. Bhutto and other opposition leaders probably judge that elections now offer them an opportunity to attain power they would not have had under Zia. Candidates apparently now will be able to run as members of a party rather than individuals--a change that will strengthen the opposition. Some analysts believe that groups within Pakistan may try to probe the tolerance of the Advisory Council on what is acceptable opposition activity. Shias are the most likely group to cause disorder during the election campaign, although other religious or ethnic groups may become more active.

20. Analysts agreed that the ability of the Pakistani Muslim League to act as an effective political party after the loss of Zia is a key question. Acting President Khan has the experience and power to direct an effective election campaign. Under the constitution, he can succeed himself as President. He may delay elections for a few weeks or a month to allow more time for the Muslim League to organize for the balloting.

What would cause a return to martial law?

21. The Pakistani military would most likely reimpose martial law in response to a deterioration in law and order, especially in the Punjab, increased domestic terrorism, or renewed tension with India.

22. Community members were undecided on whether the military would reimpose martial law if Bhutto won the election. The military would not necessarily act automatically but would assess the situation carefully. Bhutto reportedly has some support among low-level military personnel and may use the next four months to placate high-ranking officers. Many officers, however, are worried that Bhutto would take revenge on them for their support of Zia and his execution of Bhutto's father. Officers may also remember Bhutto's

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criticism of the military over the loss of Kashmir and the slow development of nuclear weapons.

23. Pakistani officers' perception that other countries were attempting to take advantage of Pakistan during a period of weakness was also likely to cause the military to reimpose martial law. Specifically, increased tension with India would prompt the military to act. Islamabad's judgment that the Soviets had significantly slowed or halted their withdrawal from Afghanistan also might encourage the military to seize power. [] commented that Pakistani perception that foreign powers had caused the crash of Zia's aircraft might cause the military to return martial law.

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Will Pakistani foreign policy change?

24. *Analysts foresee no significant change in Pakistan foreign policy over the next three months.*

25. Members of the new advisory council are pro-American and the interim regime will continue good relations with the United States. Nonetheless, the new regime will be more sensitive to Pakistani public opinion than Zia. Therefore, differences with the US may increase. Pakistan has few powerful allies, however, and has to maintain close ties with the US.

26. Pakistani relations with Kabul are likely to remain the same. Islamabad may give more evenhanded treatment to the seven major Afghan insurgent groups. Gulbuddin probably will lose his preferred status.

Will Pakistan's nuclear weapons development be affected?

27. *Community analysts judged that the new regime in Islamabad will continue Zia's policies on nuclear weapons.*

28. Development of nuclear weapons probably will go forward at the same pace. NIO/NP-CBW noted that without Zia's restraining hand, some Pakistani officials involved in development may try to speed-up the program. Perception that other countries caused the plane crash would be an especially strong incentive for Pakistan to insure its security from outside pressure by developing nuclear weapons.

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30. Iran-Iraq: Status of Ceasefire and Negotiations
(Summary of presentation by CIA) The ceasefire continues to

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hold with minor skirmishes on both sides. Tehran and Baghdad appear to have opposite negotiating strategies for the talks scheduled to begin in Geneva on 20 August. So far both sides have focused on procedural problems rather than on substance.

- Iran's strategy is based on using the UN Secretary General in an active role during the talks to avoid dealing directly with Iraq. Tehran also wants to go into the talks with no prior agreements with Iraq.
- Iraq does not want the Secretary General to play an active role in the talks and act as a middle man for Iran. Baghdad wants direct talks with the Iranians. Iraq has warned that it may not go to Geneva if the Secretary General issues a statement, prior to the talks, on reparations, blame for the war, and if the 1975 Algiers Accord is still binding on Iraq and Iran. Such matters can only be decided in talks directly with Iran, according to the Iraqis.
- Primary issues at Geneva will be: timing of the withdrawal of forces from the border, setting up a commission to determine who started the war, return of POWs, amount of reparations and who will pay them, and the viability of the Algiers Accord.

31. Although Iraq has threatened to walk out of the talks, Baghdad would suffer problems by leaving or resuming hostilities. Iran has skillfully played to international opinion, judging that most countries care only that a ceasefire is in force and are not concerned with the secondary issues and process of the negotiations. Therefore, Tehran can stall during the talks and may even try to goad Iraq into walking out. Baghdad would then appear responsible for the failure of the talks. By delaying, the Iranians also can avoid the comprehensive agreement that Baghdad seeks.

32. Neither country is likely to break the ceasefire in the short term. Civilian morale has improved in both countries during the brief period of peace. Clerics in Iran, however, are feeling pressure to show they can manage the country and deal with its problems. Rafsanjani probably is still vulnerable to radicals who opposed an end to the war. CIA analysts see little chance of an unauthorized Iranian terrorist attack on US personnel or facilities. The Arab Gulf states favor the ceasefire and peace process between Iraq and Iran. Over the longer term, they would approve of some withdrawal of US forces from the Gulf but only if the peace process shows progress.

33. *Community Discussion.* NIO/NESA commented that Iraq's worst nightmare--Iran being in the position to stall indefinitely during negotiations--appears to be coming true. Analysts agreed that Iraq was on the diplomatic defensive and

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had no non-military way to force Iran to negotiate seriously in the near term. Iraq, however, would not accept endless talks and would reach the point--after a few weeks or a month--where it would begin to consider breaking the ceasefire. Baghdad probably was not too concerned over possible international condemnation should Iraq resume hostilities. Iraq still had strong forces in the Basrah area and might seize the eastern bank of the Shat Al Arab waterway to influence Tehran. The United States, Soviet Union, West European countries, and the Gulf States probably would press Baghdad to return to a ceasefire. Iraq would already have achieved its goal and could credibly threaten more attacks if progress were not made at Geneva.

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